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Putin: Russia will respond to 'aggressive NATO rhetoric'

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Russia will take adequate measures to counter NATO's increasingly "aggressive rhetoric," President Vladimir Putin told MPs at the closing session of the State Duma. He called to create an international security system open to all countries.

It's necessary to create a collective security system void of "*bloc-like thinking*" and open to all countries, Putin said on Wednesday in Russia's parliament.

"*Russia is ready to discuss this extremely important issue,*" he said, adding that such proposals have been so far left unanswered by Western countries.

"*But again, as it was at the beginning of WWII, we don't see any positive response,*" he continued. "*On the contrary, NATO ups its aggressive rhetoric and aggressive actions near our borders.*"

"*In this environment, we must pay special attention to strengthening our country's defense capabilities,*" he concluded.

Terrorism has become the major threat to international security, Putin said, comparing it to the rise of Nazism before WWII. Facing this challenge, the international community should work together rather than remain separated and divided, he said.

"*What kind of lessons are needed to get rid of old-fashioned ideological discord and geopolitical games and unite in the fight against international terrorism? This common threat is rising right in front of us,*" Putin said.

Security issues should not prevail over economic growth and well being, the president warned: "*Security and international affairs are equally important, but there is nothing more important than economy and welfare.*"

"*These are indeed very complicated and tough issues, but our country's future depends on how we will tackle*

them.”

[NATO aims to feed fears by painting Russia as 'treacherous enemy' – Russian Defense Ministry](#)

Putin's keynote address comes amid NATO's build-up in Eastern Europe. After Crimea's re-unification with Russia in 2014, the bloc started deployment of troops, equipment and infrastructure to Poland and Baltic countries, arguing that it would protect the region from alleged *"Russian aggression."*

At the upcoming Warsaw summit in July, NATO leaders are expected to green-light deployment of four battalions of up to 800 troops in each unit to the Baltic States and Poland, along with intensifying the scale and pace of multinational military exercises. Recent live-fire drills, Anakonda 2016, Saber Strike and BALTOPS, involved thousands of troops and hundreds of combat vehicles to simulate large-scale operations in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Moscow says NATO's build-up and its hostile rhetoric towards Russia aren't helping to improve security and stability in Europe, and have triggered reciprocal measures.

The State Duma, the parliament's lower house, is expected to go into summer recess before the general election starts this autumn. MPs will spend two months in the summer visiting their constituencies to meet voters, gearing up for the Duma elections scheduled for September.

Addressing the lawmakers, President Putin said the race has to be fair and transparent, and free of foul play. *"I would like to thank all of you for everything that has been done over the past years ... and, of course, look forward to seeing what we will be doing together with the parliament in the future,"* he told MPs.

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